

In the US, in 1922, the American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) adopted a set of ethical principles titled 'Canons of Journalism', which was later revised and renamed 'Statement of Principles' in 1975.

The ASNE proposed six key principles; Responsibility, Freedom of the Press, Independence, Truth and Accuracy, Impartiality and Fair Play.

Important key principles in the journalistic ethics are as follows:

- **Truth and Accuracy:** Journalists cannot always guarantee 'truth', but getting the facts right is the cardinal principle of journalism. We should always strive for accuracy, give all the relevant facts we have and ensure that they have been checked. When we cannot corroborate information we should say so. For example avoiding Yellow journalism and paid news.
- **Independence:** Journalists must be independent voices; we should not act, formally or informally, on behalf of special interests whether political, corporate or cultural. We should declare to our editors or the audience any of our political affiliations, financial arrangements or other personal information that might constitute a conflict of interest.
- **Fairness and Impartiality:** Most stories have at least two sides. While there is no obligation to present every side in every piece, stories should be balanced and add context. Objectivity is not always possible, and may not always be desirable (in the face for example of brutality or inhumanity), but impartial reporting builds trust and confidence. For example avoiding engaging in one-sided media trials as recently done in SSR case, lobbying for personal gains, blackmailing, manipulating news stories, engaging in malicious and defamatory reporting, running propaganda and disinformation campaigns.
- **Humanity:** Journalists should do no harm. What we publish or broadcast may be hurtful, but we should be aware of the impact of our words and images on the lives of others. For example avoiding reporting based on communal angle and creating misleading headlines as done in pandemic by few channels on tabligi Jamaat issue.
- **Responsibility and Accountability:** A sure sign of professionalism and responsible journalism is the ability to hold ourselves accountable. When we commit errors we must correct them and our expressions of regret must be sincere not cynical. We listen to the concerns of our audience. We may not change what readers write or say but we will always provide remedies when we are unfair. For example recent TRP manipulation by few TV channels in 2020.

Conclusion

Journalistic ethics is more than a gut feeling of right and wrong. It encompasses a broad set of standards that are under constant review, and you, as a practitioner, must take the ethical responsibilities of the profession seriously at all times, in that way you will bring honour to journalism and see to it that you have helped to maintain the integrity of its practice for future generations.